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May 2013

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medium

Mastering the delicate
balancing act of family
time and electronics

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faces of
family

A tale of adoption, and a
journey to just the right home

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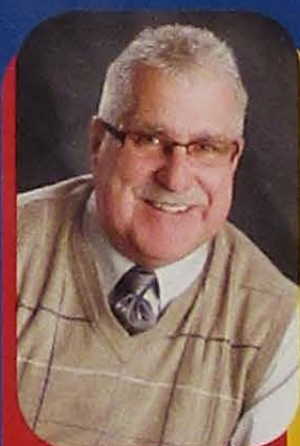


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Fac•et - n. 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.
2. The particular angle from which something is considered.



← Mark and Meg Frideres of Nevada and their three children Elliot, left, Nicholas, center, and Lillian talk about their multicultural family. Photo by Amy Vinchattle/Facets

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My mom is my best friend. I don't know what I would do without her.

She says the same thing about her mom, whom I also do not know what I would do without.

My two sisters and I have always had a close relationship with my Grandma Lois, who turned 86 this March. We have always known her to be a remarkably intelligent and caring woman, and our appreciation for her role in our lives has grown with age.

If it was raining after school, she and my grandpa were parked within a block, ready to provide a dry ride home. If we stayed home sick, they would check in — my grandma to make sure we did not need anything, and my grandpa with some gumdrops and corn curls for when we got past the fever or flu.

My first job was as a dishwasher at a home for elderly nuns, all of whom adored my grandma, who worked there for many years as activities director and caring for nuns with Alzheimer's Disease and dementia.

She cared for my grandpa when he grew sick, and cared daily for other sick or dying relatives in the 10 years since my grandpa passed away.

She attends exercise classes a couple of days a week, and has learned to use a laptop and Facebook to stay connected with a large network of family and friends.

She campaigned for a candidate in the 2008 election, and volunteers each year at a center in Dubuque that helps low-income individuals with tax preparation.

Then she told my uncle that she was



JENNIFER MEYER

thinking of completing a general education development, or GED, course. She couldn't back out after my uncle, who was interviewing for school superintendent in Dubuque, mentioned her plans during a public forum.

She achieved her goal in remarkable fashion.

Newspapers from coast to coast republished an article about an 85-year-old Iowa woman who completed her GED over the span of 59 school days. Readers from across the country mailed newspaper clippings and wrote of how she inspired them.

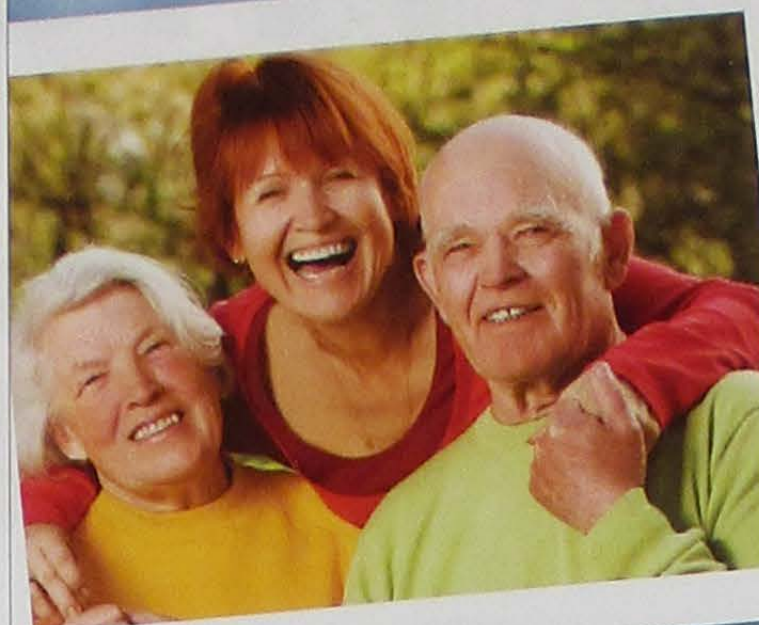
About a month after my grandma received her GED, I had only one week to study for a licensing exam for my new job. I let her achievement inspire me.

"Lois was highly motivated. She stuck to it and was always in a good mood," Laurie Anderson, one of her instructors at the learning center at Northeast Iowa Community College, told the Dubuque Telegraph Herald.

"It was nice how she blended with the other students," Anderson said. "She was like their grandma."

I am proud to share her. ♦

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The many faces of family

A TALE OF ADOPTION, AND A JOURNEY TO JUST THE RIGHT HOME





Mark and Meg Frideres, of Nevada, and their three children, Elliot, right, Nicholas, left, and Lillian, enjoy time together at their home. Photo by Amy Vinchattle/Facets

BY SAMANTHA BOYD

Sitting together on the sofa in their Nevada home, Mark and Meg Frideres' three Korean children tell their family story as well as their adopted parents.

"You tried to have kids, but you didn't. So, you adopted us instead," 8-year-old Nicholas tells his parents. "Good thing you got us."

After seven years of marriage and without success conceiving a child, the couple made a life-changing decision in 2002 to apply to be adoptive parents.

"The application was a breeze, but then there were interviews, home visits, extensive background checks, financial documentation and letters of recommendation that we had to gather," Meg said, describing the long process.

Mark, a self-employed chiropractor in Nevada, said jokingly, "Basically the social workers knew more about us than most of our close friends."

CHANGED FOREVER

Meg, who teaches social studies at Nevada High School, said she and Mark waited 16 months for a child. Their baby was a boy from South Korea.

On Nov. 12, 2003, Mark and Meg met 4-month-old Elliot at Des Moines International Airport.

"Sometimes Plan B is more amazing than you could ever have imagined," Mark

"Is our family different because we are multi-racial? Yes. But in all essence, family is family. It's all about their soul finding your soul."

— MEG FRIDERES

said. "When I held Elliot for the first time, it forever changed me. I was a dad."

Friends say the children were lucky to be adopted by Mark and Meg, "But that's not how we see it at all," Mark said. "It wasn't us 'saving' them; we were given the opportunity to be a part of their lives."

GOTCHA DAYS

Planning for another 16-month wait, Mark and Meg applied for their second child only one week after Elliot's adoption finalized.

They joke that Nicholas was their "uh-oh" baby.

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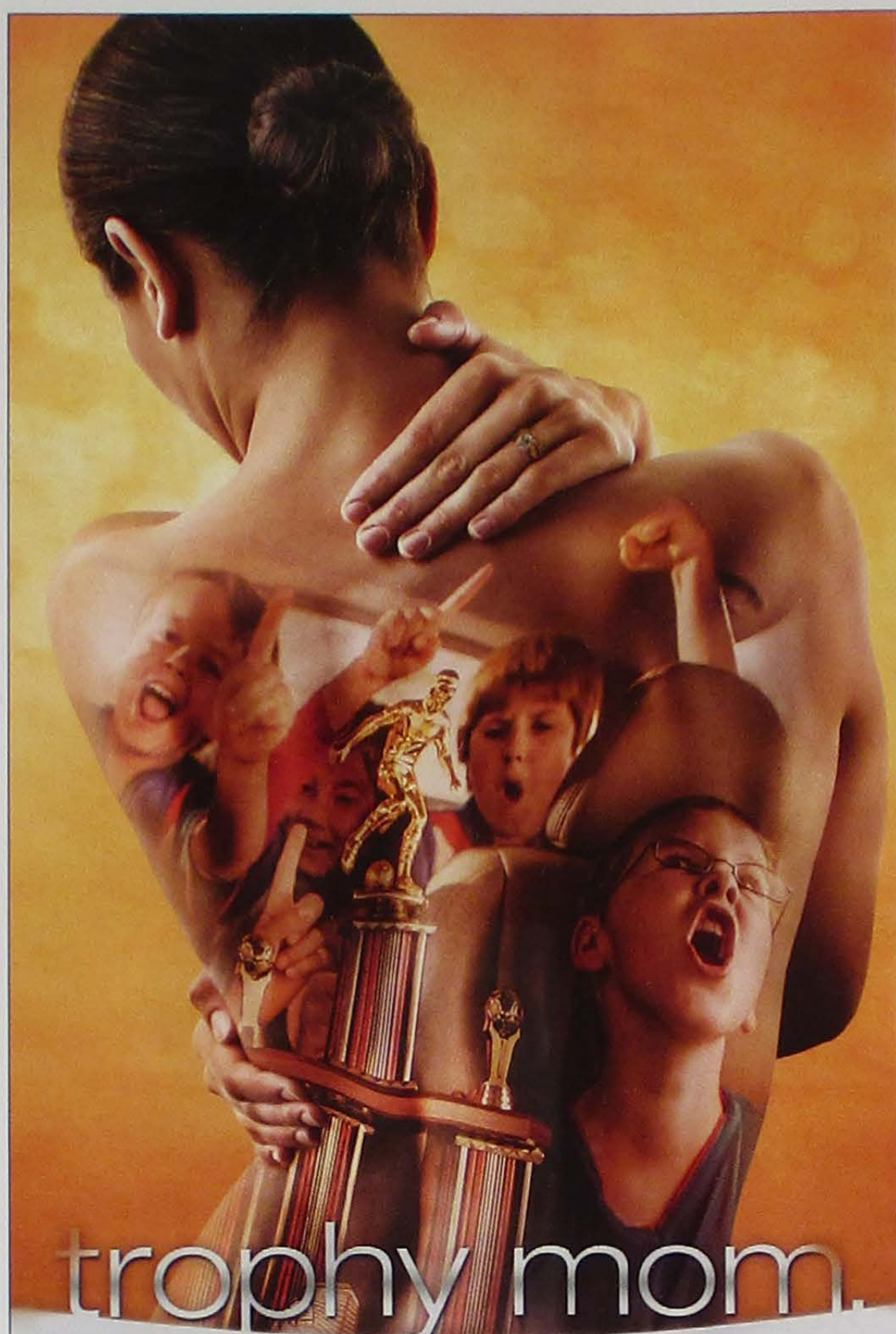


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"We were starting to get a few things gathered for the second baby, and Mark casually told me that if we got the call next week, it would not be ideal, but we could make it happen," Meg said.

The next day, the call came that their second child would join their family the next week — only 12 months after their application.

On July 7, now deemed Nicholas' "Gotcha Day," Mark and Meg once again drove to the Des Moines airport, this time to take home a preemie boy only 3 ½ months old.

All three children celebrate their "Gotcha Day" each year, as well their birthdays.

"Gotcha Days are different than birthdays," Elliot, 9, said. "On Gotcha Days, we get one present from our parents and one from our siblings."

PRINCESS FROM KOREA

The Frideres family seemed complete, but Mark soon began to "dream big," he said.

"I envisioned myself running teenage boys off my front porch and walking my daughter down the aisle," he said.

Meg laughs as she recalls her reaction.

"I said, 'Mark! I already sold the Pack n' Play!'"

The couple prayed for a month and realized God blessed them with the ability and the means to adopt again. A little girl was the missing piece to their family.

Meg made the trip to Korea with Mark's father to pick up their 10-month-old daughter in Seoul. Mark stayed home with the two young boys.

On Sept. 12, Meg brought home Lillian.

"Standing at the top of the elevators in the Des Moines airport, I was so emotional," Meg said. "I was going to introduce my husband to the baby girl that he had dreamt about."

Sitting on her father's lap, there is no doubt Lillian is the princess of the house. She works on her pronunciation of tol-jabee, the first Korean birthday, which is the most culturally important.

She also shows off her traditional Korean outfit, including a photo of her wearing it, and points out that it's pink.

CELEBRATING KOREAN CULTURE

In addition to celebrating their children's traditional tol-jabees, Mark and Meg try to incorporate Korean culture, including regularly preparing Korean meals.

"I think Korean food tastes good," Elliot said. "I really like bee bim bop."

Last year the family attended the Asian Heritage Festival in Des Moines.

"Honoring our children's culture is really important," Mark said. "We've promised to take them all back to Korea, if they want, when they turn 18."

The couple lets each child decide how to incorporate their culture into their lives.

Lillian learns from a Korean alphabet books while Elliot is excited to talk about Korean traditions that he has discovered, "even before mom and dad."

Nicholas is more nonchalant.

"It is extremely humbling knowing that you were meant to be the parents of these children who were born half way across the world," Meg said.

"Is our family different because we are multi-racial? Yes," she said. "But in all essence, family is family. It's all about their soul finding your soul." ♦

A happy medium

Mastering the delicate balancing act of family time and electronics



BY JENNIFER MEYER
FACETS EDITOR

Family comes first in the Broders house — before cell phones, video games and the Internet.

"We have never eaten (dinner) without each other," said Mikael, 9.

Mikael's mother, Stephanie, said her son and 12-year-old daughter, Myah, are

allowed to use electronic entertainment about two hours each night, between dinner and bedtime.

"We talk about what we did at school and how school went," Myah said of dinnertime. "I just like to hear how everyone's day went."

Stephanie said her children have a Kindle, Wii, desktop computer, laptop and personal cell phones.

"Mikael's phone only gives him access

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Mikael Broders, 9, left, and his sister, Myah, 12, play Mario Kart Wii before dinner at their home in Ames. Photo by Amy Vinchattle/Facets

to the Internet, but Maya's is operational so she can call us," she said.

Stephanie wishes her children relied less on electronic entertainment, but said it helps with the hectic task she and her husband, Jeff, face as working parents.

"You just make it work," she said.

Stephanie, a personal trainer in Ames, and Jeff, a tire builder at Firestone in Des Moines, have laid down rules for the time Mikael and Myah spend with electronic entertainment.

Myah said homework must be completed first.

"I have a lot of homework usually because I'm in sixth grade," Myah said. After dinner, "my dad likes to help me with my homework."

Mikael also said, "I do my homework first, if I have homework."

Stephanie admits she worries a little about Mikael's computer savviness.

"I have talked to him about what he's watching on (YouTube)," Stephanie said, explaining that Jeff has done the same with Mikael.

She and Jeff check his Internet bookmarks and history.

Stephanie said she is more concerned, however, with Mikael's ability to communicate with other online gamers while playing first-person the Wii games. She fears an adult predator could pose as child to gain Mikael's trust.

"I don't really interact about my life," Mikael said, repeating his parents' instructions. "I just talk about the game and how we should attack."

Stephanie said she worries less about what Myah is viewing online.

"She's a very responsible child," Stephanie said.

"There's videos that people do about their guinea pigs and it's just fun to do," Myah said of using the Internet on her cell phone. "I got the guinea pigs and I want to learn more about them. I think when I'm older, I'll want to be a vet."

Myah can also call or text her friends after homework, and sometimes plays Just Dance 4, a video game she received as a birthday present, with friends who visit.

By 9 p.m., Stephanie said the whole family tries to turn off cell phones and video games, and read in bed before falling asleep.

"I like to read about pets and I also have chapter books and they're usually realistic fiction," Myah said.

Mikael also likes to read chapter books, usually about adventure and mystery, he said.

"Reading always puts me to sleep, so I feel it helps," Stephanie said. "I feel like it's just a good way to wind down."

Therapist Alyson Pearson's advice to families includes many of the measures the Broders family has in place, including turning off the electronic devices at least one hour before bed.

"When your brain has that much stimulation, it's hard for you to go to sleep," said Pearson, with Barclay & Associates, a family counseling practice in Ames.

Pearson said many parents often believe their child has attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, but "really they just never learned the skills to entertain themselves," through creative games, drawing, reading and playing outside.

When children do not learn to relax, "their brains get addicted to almost constant stimulation," she said. ♦

Keys to setting and maintaining the balance

BY ALYSON PEARSON, THERAPIST WITH BARCLAY & ASSOCIATES

1. SET TIME LIMITS

"It's good for kids to keep in contact with their friends, so they do need some time," Pearson said. "But parents need to say, 'You're going to have an hour tonight.'"

2. WATCH FOR WHAT CHILDREN ARE HIDING

"If it seems like there's something they don't want you to see, that's probably something to worry about," Pearson said.

Texting and Facebook can create cyber conflicts that children take with them to school.

"They start saying things they wouldn't say out loud," Pearson said, "They feel safe making threats by text or the cell phone."

Girls can also feel more comfortable making sexually provocative statements that increase pressure faced with in-person situations, she said.

Pearson said parents often try to do the right thing by taking away cell phones or reviewing text threads, but do not realize their children can download texting apps or access Facebook on iPods and other devices.

3. LEVERAGE THE INTERNET

Pearson suggested having children look alone or with parents on sites such as Pinterest for activities they can do with their hands, using their brains, or complete as a family.

4. MAKE "NO SCREEN TIME" A FAMILY RULE

"I hear a lot of kids complain, too, that the parent is the one always on the cell phone or always on the device," Pearson said. "If an adult can't put one down, think of how difficult it is for kids." Stephanie said she uses electronic devices at work, and doesn't like to spend time with them while she is at home with her family.

"We didn't have a lot of access (growing up) like they do now," she said. "It worries me that it will take away from family values and focusing on each other."

Pearson said many parents often believe their child has attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, but "really they just never learned the skills to entertain themselves," through creative games, drawing, reading and playing outside. When children do not learn to relax, "their brains get addicted to almost constant stimulation."

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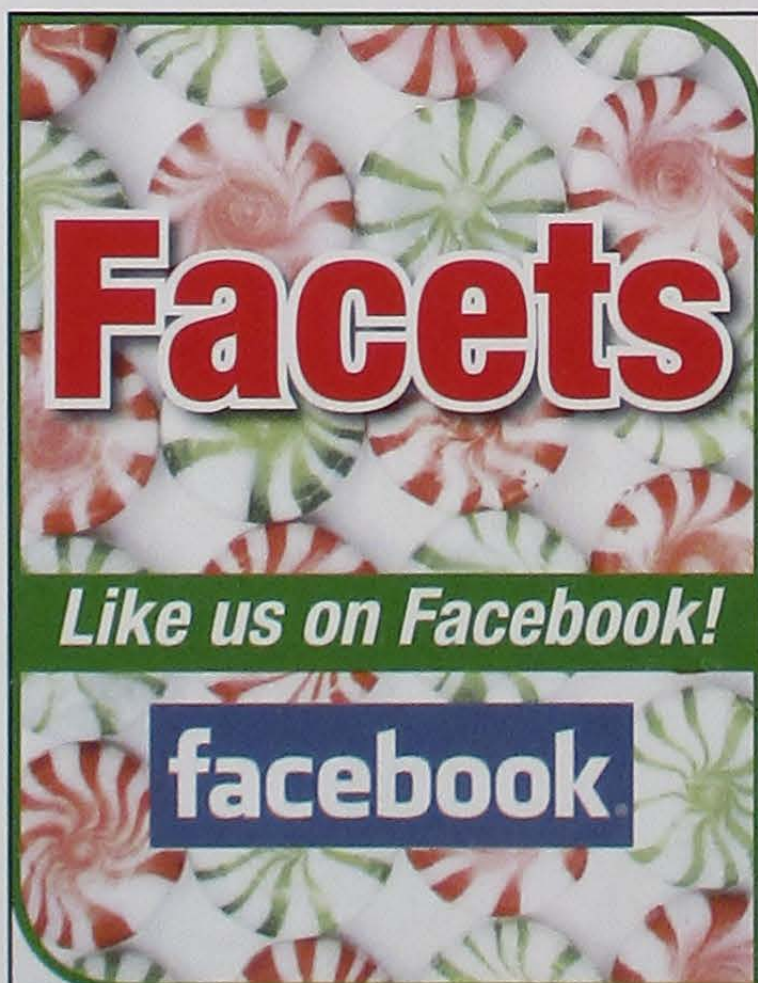
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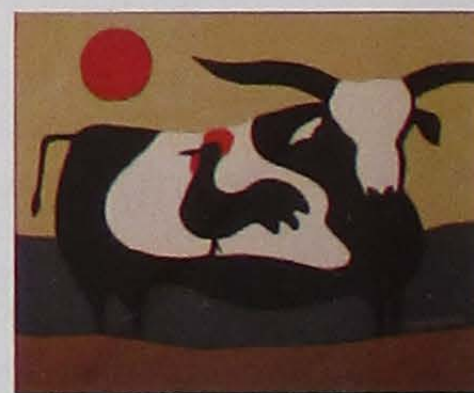
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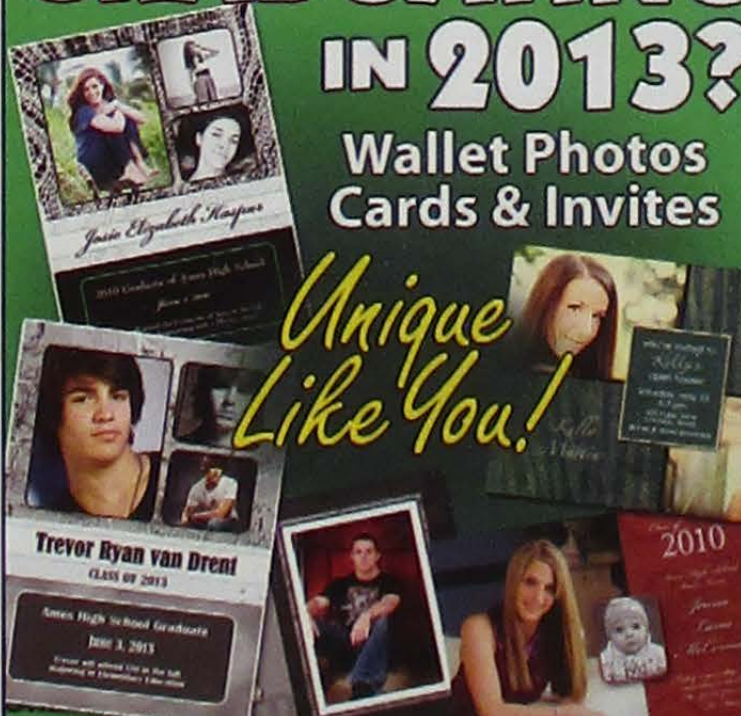


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Curly girl:



**MARY CLARE
LOKKEN**

I want to say "I told you so," in a nice way. It seems like only yesterday that we were wearing curly perms. No wait, that was 1972 and I was still blonde, and teaching high school in Wisconsin. So it was only 40 years ago. My, how time flies, and yet I'm not a day older.

As I was researching what's popular in beauty, as I always do to write this column, I remembered writing last summer that curl was making a comeback. With the latest news about curly hair, I have my chance to say, "I told you so."

Here's what's new about curl, wave and all things with movement in the hair world: There is a new system to define types of curl.

WHAT'S YOUR CURL TYPE?

- Type I: No curl.
- Type II: Wavy, loose and less-defined open waves.
- Type III: Curvy. A mix of tight curls and loose curls, hair can be relaxed or bouncy.
- Type IV: Curly. The bouncy curl starts with ringlets and includes compact curls.
- Type V: Springy. With any density of hair, curls appear thicker and full of body. They can be tightly coiled or densely compact twists of hair.
- Type VI: Spiral. This is densest, most compact, driest and most fragile type because the texture is a zigzag pattern of curls.

RULES FOR CURLS:

1. Use a diffuser to protect the hair fiber. Intense use of all hot tools must have heat protecting products to accompany them.
2. Curly hair is drier by nature and the natural oils at the scalp don't travel as easily to the ends, so shampoo every few days, not daily.

Curls can be very flexible without a lot of effort. Finger styling your short curly look with a diffuser can be flirtatious. A quick curly up do can be to simply pull one side of your curls up and back into a decorative hair comb for an asymmetrical look.

Brady Snider, education director at PCI Academy, suggests you should rock your natural curl or create a natural looking wave or curl with today's products. Finished, polished looks are in, and there are a variety of curl-style products to get you there. ♦



Mary Clare Lokken is the owner of PCI Academy in Ames. She writes this column after consulting with educators there. Reach her via email at MaryClareLokken@aol.com.

This season's comeback kid



Think Stock photo

You should rock your **natural** curl or create a natural looking wave or curl with today's products. Finished, **polished** looks are in, and there are a variety of curl-style products to get you there.

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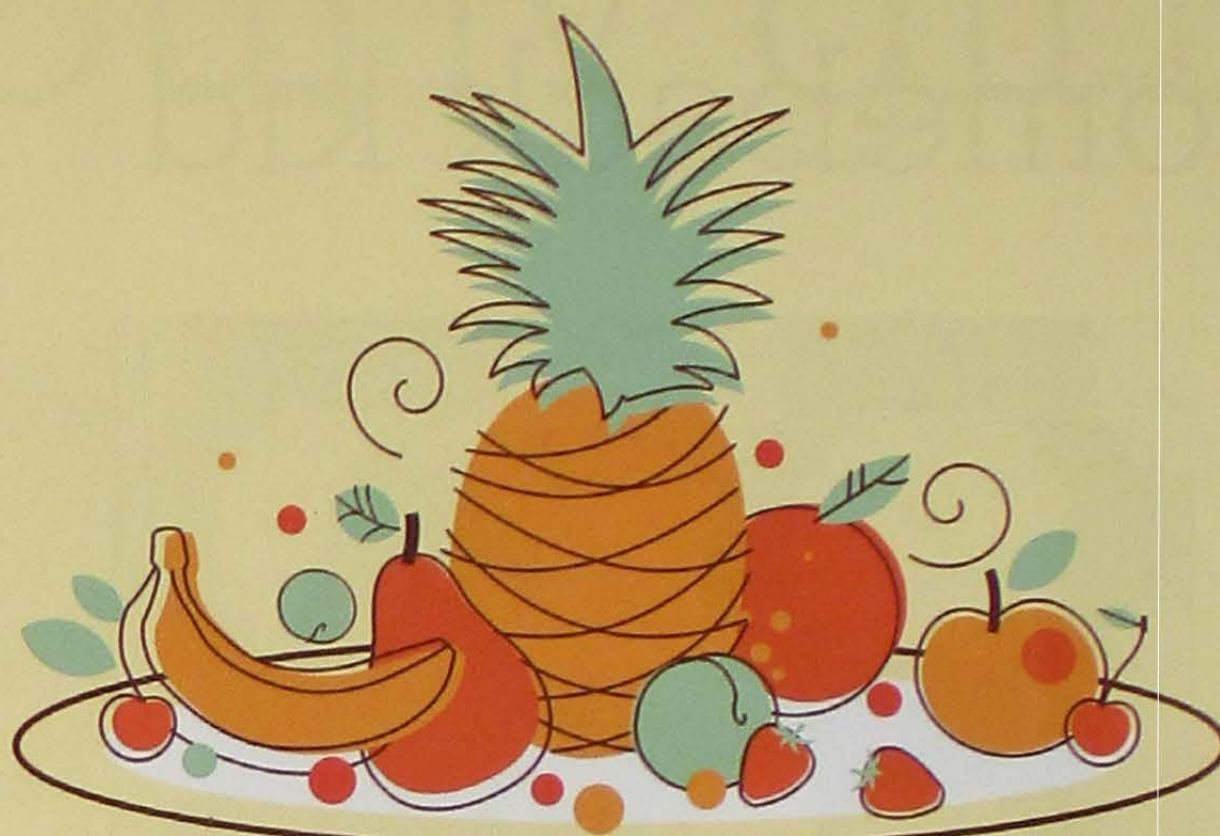
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Eating at home offers many benefits for the whole family

The average family's day-to-day activities are increasingly hectic, creating a challenge for families to find time to eat together. There is value in eating together, however, and research shows this value stretches far beyond the food on the table to the conversations around it.

More and more families are choosing to prepare and eat meals at home. Many



**NICOLE
 ARNOLD**

studies show increased academic performance, lower risk for drug use and healthier eating patterns in teens who have five to seven family meals per week versus those who have fewer than three family meals per week.

THE RESULTS ARE IN:

Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners, teens who have infrequent family dinners are:

- Twice as likely to have used tobacco
- Nearly twice as likely to have used alcohol

Recipe

Peppered Steak Salad with Balsamic-Parmesan Dressing

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 (10 oz) beef sirloin steak
- Coarsely ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup fat-free balsamic vinaigrette
- 3 tbsp shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 (12 oz) pkg salad greens
- 1 large eggs, hard-cooked, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- Croutons, optional

Directions

1. Season steak with black pepper. Grill to desired doneness. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before slicing into thin strips.
2. Meanwhile, combine balsamic vinaigrette with Parmesan cheese. Set aside.
3. Arrange one-fourth of the salad blend in each of 4 salad bowls. Top each with strips of steak, egg slices and halved cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with vinaigrette. Sprinkle with croutons, if desired.

Nutrition facts per serving: 200 calories, 10g fat, 4.5g saturated fat, 0g trans-fat, 80mg cholesterol, 250mg sodium, 5g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 3g sugar, 19g protein.
Daily values: 70% vitamin A, 20% vitamin C, 10% calcium, 10% iron.

• One and one-half times as likely to have used marijuana.

A study done at Harvard Medical School found that families who dine together frequently:

- Lower their children's odds of being overweight by 15 percent
- Eat less fried foods and drink less soda
- Are twice as likely to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day

University of Michigan research showed family meal time was the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems.

MEAL TIME IS FAMILY TIME

Preparing and eating meals together as a family has real value — for family relationships and children's success. It provides quality time for conversations, passing on traditions and strengthening the family.

Make meal time easier and divide tasks among family members so everyone is involved in the process from planning and preparing to clean-up. Involve your family in meal planning by having children choose a favorite food or recipe they would like to enjoy or help prepare. Make it fun. Choose a

dinner theme such as baked potato bar, taco night or homemade top-your-own personal pizza.

COST-SAVING

The current economy and rising costs have people re-thinking meals prepared at home as a way to save money. People are taking advantage of storebrands and ad specials, and buying in bulk, as ways to keep on track with budgets. Making meals at home is also a great way to pack lunches for the next work or school day. Cook once; serve twice.

WHOLESOME MEALS

When meals are prepared at home, you have more control over the personal preferences of family members, along with the nutrient content of that meal. Home-cooked meals tend to have higher intakes of fruits, vegetables and dairy products. And portions are more easily controlled.

Comfort foods are making a big comeback for meal times. Grandma's pot roast or Mom's mac and cheese bring back warm memories and are finding their way back to the table for meals. ♦

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Kids pick up on what you say and do, and money matters are no exception

The mother of a 12-year-old told me she never talks about politics in front of her children.

"When they are older, I want them to form their own political views," the mother said. "I don't want my political views to influence them."

I was surprised and more than a little skeptical. I thought, "Is that really true? Does she believe the only things her children know about her is what she tells them?"

My children often didn't listen to my words, but paid attention to my actions. I am surprised — sometimes pleasantly, sometimes not so pleasantly — when I see my behavior in my children.

If your children might grow up to be "just like Mom," what are you teaching them by the way you think and act about money?

Here is a short quiz to consider your financial attitude on just three topics.

1. Are you concerned about the direction the economy is heading?



**KAREN
PETERSEN**

If you answered YES:

- o Do you think the economy is improving?
- o Do you think the economy is getting worse?

2. Is it more cumbersome than ever to manage your financial details?

- o How often do you monitor and change your investments?
- o How many credit cards do you have?

3. How do you manage consumerism?

- o Do you live life today, as though you had more income?
- o Even when the budget is tight, do you make small, yet extravagant purchases?

How you think, act and talk about money has a profound effect on your children.

Are you concerned about the direction the economy is heading?

Most of us have no ability to influence the economy, so worrying about the direction of the economy is of no value. Spend your energy where you do have

influence — your personal economy.

An adequate cash reserve, automated savings and routine auto and home maintenance plans put you in a position to be prepared for the unexpected.

Is it more cumbersome than ever to manage your financial details?

Most of us feel compelled to, or at least think we should, take an active role managing our money. Eliminate some of the financial redundancy:

- Roll old retirement plans into a single IRA.
- Keep all investment accounts with a single brokerage.
- Eliminate all but two credit cards.
- Use one, not multiple banks for checking and savings.
- Consider using your bank's online and automated bill pay service.

How do you handle consumerism?



As a family or individually, better your spending practices by only making purchases within your means. Thinkstock photo.

We often say, "I deserve _____." You fill in the blank; it could be anything from a latte on the way to work each day to a Disney vacation.

The truth is, you deserve what you can afford. Spending is not an entitlement. If you spend money you don't have, you are limiting your future options.

Bemoaning the national economy, struggling with unnecessarily cumbersome financial details or using credit cards to enhance your lifestyle is probably not the message you want to give your child.

Because life ... is more than money. ♦

Karen L. Petersen, CFP®
CDFA™, is a fee-based financial advisor. She graduated from Iowa State University in family resource management. You can contact her at (515) 232-2785 or karen@mymorethanmoney.net.

Mary Greeley Medical Center's

13th Annual HopeRun for Hospice

Saturday, June 15, 2013

Ames Middle School
3915 Mortensen Road

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Register Today!

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Registration & packet pickup

8:00 a.m.

5K race
Non-competitive 1-mile

9:15 a.m.

Hope Run, Jr.
• Ages 6 & under-50m
• Ages 7 & 8-100m
• Ages 9 & 10-200m

9:30 a.m.

Age Group & Team Awards
• Medals to top 3 finishers in 14 categories
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fitness | **EXERCISE WISDOM**

A daughter's advice to her mother

Healthy lifestyle for all ages

As an adult in the 1960s and 1970s, my mom exercised and dieted off and on. This year, at 86, my beautiful mother rendered me speechless when she patted her stomach and asked for some exercises to "work on this."

"Now, she asks me?"

I thought.

For 28 years of my professional fitness career, I've encouraged family members to exercise, but in the last 10 years left the conversation for them to initiate.

What follows is what I wish to tell her and others.

- Lift weights — the heavier the better, at least two days a week. Resistance training provides greater muscle mass and bone density, so you'll be stronger and leaner than your sedentary peers.

- Find an exercise you enjoy, and which leaves you out of breath. Repeat it at least three times a week. Music, your social environment and routine variety all factor in how long you'll stick to it and how long you choose to exercise.

- Be active on the days you don't formally exercise. If your exercise circle grows smaller, don't be afraid to seek out new and younger friends, who challenge you to keep pace. It will keep you young too.

- Stop wondering what the neighbors



**DEBRA
ATKINSON**

think, and get outside. Hang the laundry out, garden, or just enjoy the yard, even if your neighbors are entertaining company.

- Let your houseguests spend some time alone if they don't want to go for a walk. Take that time to take care of you.

- If, over the past 10 years, pulling weeds from between the sidewalk cracks causes back pain, it's going to hurt again this year. Hire someone to get it done.

- Eat more protein during every meal, and before and after exercise as you age so you retain muscle in these latter decades. Salads, cabbage and grapefruit are not all they are cracked up to be.

- Diets will not make you happy and won't make your loved ones happy watching you. Figure out how to eat well and right every day of your life. Every diet you're "on" has an eventual "off ramp."

- Don't wait until you want to "work on your tummy" to ask about exercises to help. Those exercises would have kept your back from hurting pulling the weeds.

- Exercise is not something that you do when you think you need it. It helps you feel like the amazing woman I've always known that you are.

- It's never too late to start. ♦

Debra Atkinson, MS, CSCS, is an author, speaker and fitness professional who trains the trainers. She graduated from Iowa State University where she later taught for 13 years. Reach her at debra@voiceforfitness.com



Photo by Eli Hamann/Facets

SHOULDER STAND (SHOWN ABOVE)

You need not be a yogi or practice regularly but yes, it helps. Creativity is often born of gaining new perspective. What better way than to practice yoga, releasing old ways of thinking, tight constrained ways of holding tension to free the mind to both be empty yet ride with new ideas. Inversions in yoga are known for increasing circulation to the head as well as enhancing circulation. If you have a prior existing condition or have problems with wrist, shoulders or neck, consult with your physician before attempting this exercise.

Inversions are also known to be difficult. This version of a shoulder stand is a good initiation to the pose and though still requires good shoulder and upper body strength, it's a good place to begin.

1. Stand with your back to a wall, about three to four feet away depending on the length of your legs.
2. Place your hands on the floor as if you were beginning downward dog.
3. Gradually "walk" your feet up the wall to 90 degrees. Because you're inverted it may be necessary to have someone cue you as to whether you are indeed at a 90 degree angle.
4. Make sure your shoulders are aligned over your wrists and you are evenly placing weight over all fingers and thumbs. Imagine your biceps and triceps spiraling around your upper arms gently rotating your elbows inward to face each other for stabilization.
5. Hold for as long as you are comfortable. And slowly come out of the pose.
6. Enjoy a child's pose to rest the back, neck and arms.



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faceted woman | **STEPHANIE HASSEBROCK**

Name: Stephanie Hassebrock

Age: 30

Position: Marketing Communications Specialist at Mary Greeley Medical Center

Family: Fiancé, Bill

What would you do with \$1,000 to spend on yourself?

I'm not usually one to spend money on myself, but if I had to spend \$1,000 on just me I'd buy some sort of exercise machine — a treadmill or an elliptical maybe. I actually rather enjoy working out; it's the getting up and leaving the house that gets in my way.

Your favorite meal:

I'm kind of obsessed with Hy-Vee's sesame chicken, which probably makes its dietitians cringe. I do limit myself to eating it about once a week though. It's just so good and so cheap — I'm not sure how you go wrong when you pair it with fried rice and a crab Rangoon.

I never leave home without:

My sunglasses. Most people would say their wallet or cell phone, but I've absolutely left home without those before. I can't stand driving without sunglasses when it's super bright out, so I make sure I always have a pair with me.

Your favorite motto:

Several years ago, I was at my aunt and uncle's house and on one of their walls, they had etched a quote by Leo Tolstoy, right above a picture of their little boy who had passed away several years earlier. It read, "If you want to be happy, be."

It seems so simple, but day in and day out we get dragged down by these little things in life, and here were my aunt and uncle, trying to live out that motto after experiencing one of the worst losses a person can experience. It really put it into perspective. Your happiness is your own, and we're much too quick sometimes to allow it to be wrapped up in other people or things.

What makes you happy?

So many things make me happy, which I suppose is a good thing! My fiancé makes me happy and made me about the happiest I've ever been when he proposed last October. In addition to him, I'm surrounded by the most amazing people — family and friends alike. It also makes me happy when I'm able to make someone else happy. Lastly, Iowa State athletics make me happy. I'm an Iowa State alum, as is my fiancé, and for both of us to be back in Ames and be football season ticket holders is pretty awesome.

What makes you laugh?

I'm pretty easily amused, so this question for me would be better phrased if it read, "What doesn't make you laugh?" I'm a big fan of comedies and I think the funniest shows on television right now are "Modern Family" and "The Big Bang Theory."

What have you accomplished that has made you proud?

I've struggled with my weight for the past 10 years or so, and in 2010, I managed to drop 70 pounds. I've gained some of it back,



Stephanie Hassebrock, with her fiancé, Bill, is grateful for what she has in life. Contributed photo

which is frustrating, but when you've accomplished something once, it makes it easier to accomplish again. I'm also proud of where I'm at career-wise. I've held four jobs since I graduated from college in 2005, but it's only been since I started at Mary Greeley last August that I really feel like I've found my niche. It's such a great place to work, and there is rarely a day where I don't leave feeling a sense of accomplishment. It's easy to feel accomplished, though, when you're proud of where you work.

If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?

Honestly, I'm not sure I'd change anything. I used to think about what I'd change if I could go back—but all the things that I wish had panned out differently got me to where I am. It's hard to want to change anything when everything that has happened has made me the person I am today.

My simplest pleasure:

I think for me it's reading a good book. I've been a reader for as long as I can remember. In fact, I used to get made fun of when I was little for being such a bookworm.

I secretly love:

The Twilight series. I almost can't believe I'm putting that in writing and anyone reading this who knows me is probably going to make fun of me, but I can't help it. I realize the premise is absolutely ridiculous, but I got sucked in.

When I am an old lady:

I hope that I'll be with my old man, in good health, surrounded by our kids and their kids, and maybe even their kids. I'd like to not have too many wrinkles either, but I'll take what I can get.

I am thankful for:

God. I'm not trying to spark any sort of a religious debate but I believe that everything I have, God chose for me to have, and my life is unbelievably blessed. Between my family, my fiancé, my friends — and the fact that I have food on my table and a roof over my head — I'm not sure what else I could ask for. ♦

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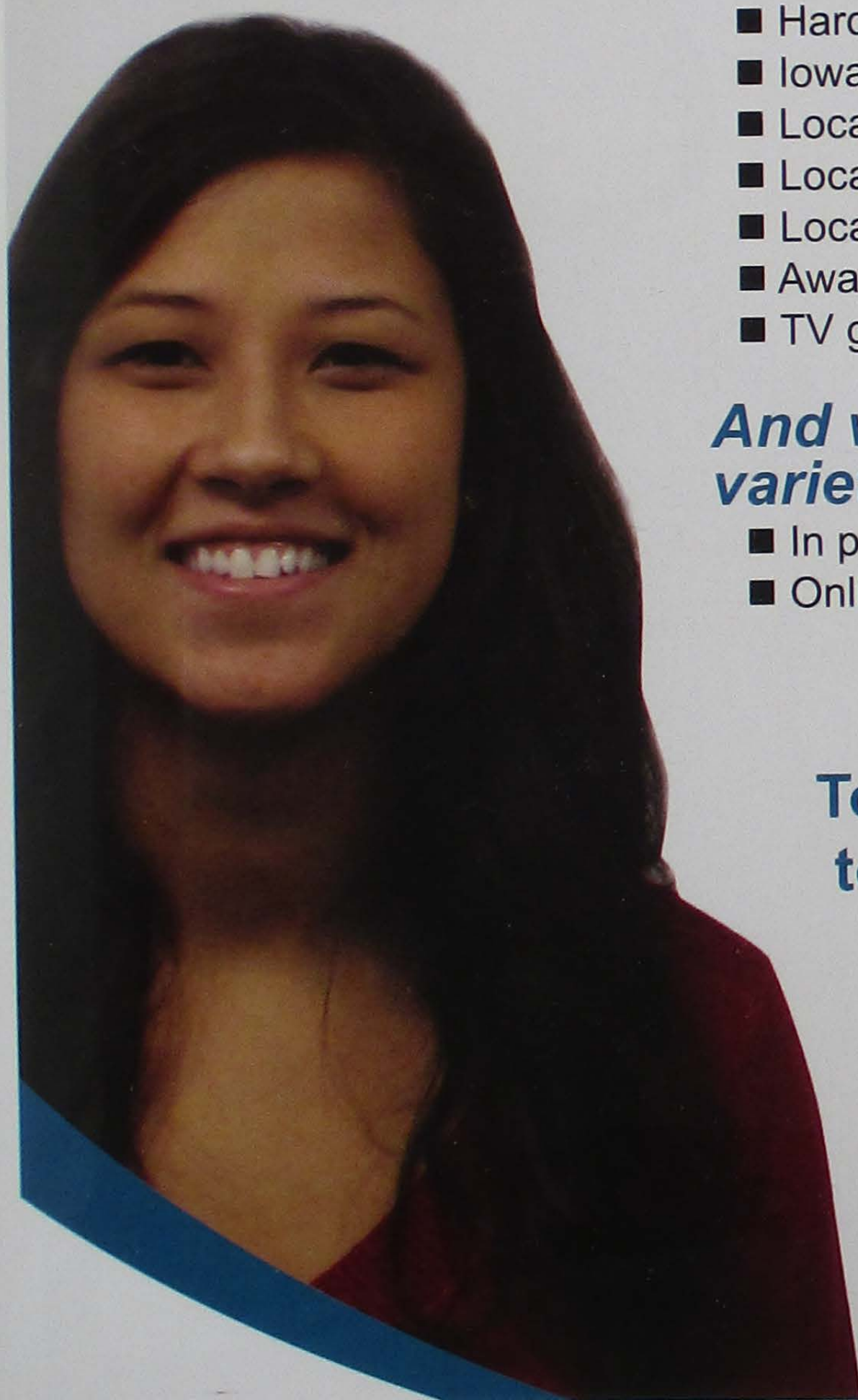
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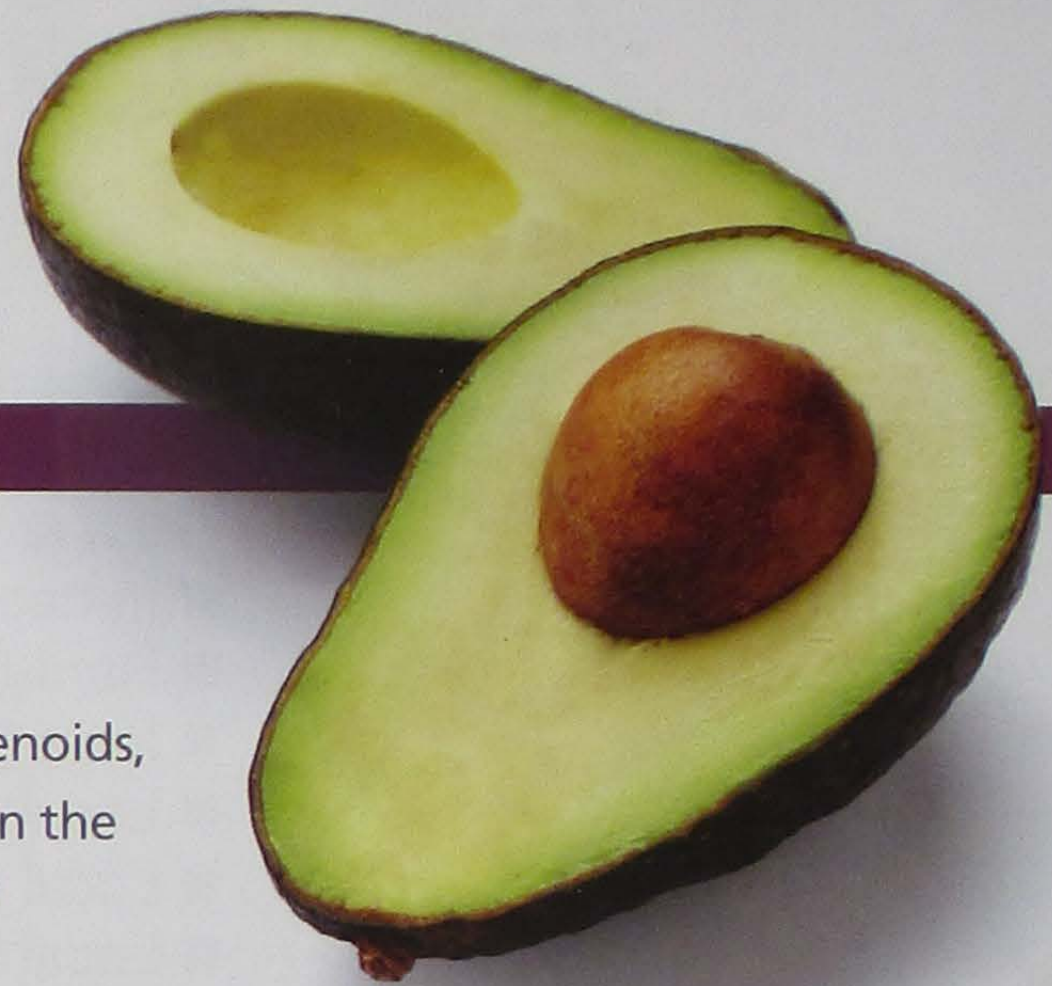
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California Avocado



Did you know?

The greatest concentration of carotenoids, such as lutein, in avocados is found in the dark green layer closest to the peel?

California Avocado

- A new way to cut: Cut, Nick and Peel - Cut in quarters, nick and peel skin from avocado to get nutrient-rich, dark green fruit under peel.
- One-fifth of a medium avocado or 3 thin slices has 50 calories and 2 grams fiber.
- The majority of fat is monounsaturated, a healthy fat good for heart health.
- An avocado contains 20 vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients including vitamin K, folate, potassium and vitamin E.

Easy to Use

- Test for ripeness: Gently squeeze in palm of hand. Ready to eat when avocado will yield to gentle pressure.
- Mash for a spread for sandwiches, wraps or bagels.
- Dice for salads, pasta, tacos, omelets and pizza.
- Slice for burgers or BLT sandwiches.
- Splash with balsamic vinegar or fresh lime juice; add black pepper and salt. Serve with whole-grain crackers.
- Toss into fruit smoothies to add creaminess

The information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.